

The Library Assistant:

The Official Organ of the Library Assistants' Association.

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Published Monthly

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

FEBRUARY MEETING.

The next meeting of the Association will be held at the **Shoreditch Central Public Library**, Pitfield Street, N., by kind invitation of William C. Plant, Esq., Chief Librarian, on **Wednesday, February 13th**, when the following papers will be read and discussed:—

7.30 p.m. **Junior paper: H. C. Sawtell**, Wimbledon Public Library, "Blacking-out of Betting News."

8.15 p.m. **Senior papers: (1) R. F. Bullen**, District Librarian, Bow Library, Poplar. "Library Catalogues: their Effects and Defects."

(2) **Horace Barlow**, The London Library. "The Future of the Catalogue."

Shoreditch Central Library is within 5 minutes' walk of Old Street Station (Electric Railway), and of Shoreditch Church, which may be reached by omnibus from all parts. It is also within easy walking distance of Liverpool Street, Broad Street, and Moorgate Railway Stations.

VISIT TO THE LONDON INSTITUTION.

A visit will be made to the London Institution, Finsbury Circus, E.C., on the afternoon of **Wednesday, February 13th**, at 3.30 o'clock, by special permission of the Governing Board. The party will be received by R. W. Frazer, Esq., LL.B., Secretary of the Institution, and the various departments will be inspected. These include a fine library, a lecture theatre, etc. It is hoped that members and friends will be present in good numbers. Ladies are specially invited.

The London Institution is situated on the north side of Finsbury Circus within a stone's throw of Liverpool Street, Broad Street, and Moorgate Street Stations. Tea will be readily procurable in the neighbourhood, and the Shoreditch Library, where the evening meeting takes place, is only a few hundred yards distant.

BOHEMIAN CONCERT.

The practice of holding a social evening during each Session is to be revived, and a Bohemian Concert will take place on Wednesday evening, March 6th, at the Cripplegate Institute, Golden Lane, E.C. All members and friends (including ladies) are cordially invited, and those intending to be present are requested to send a postcard to Mr. W. Geo. Chambers, Public Library, Plumstead, not later than February 28th, in order that arrangements as to refreshments, etc., may be made. Admission will be by programme, price 6d.

SUMMER HOLIDAY ARRANGEMENTS.

Proposed Visit to Belgium.

Arrangements are being made by the L.A.A. for a party of library assistants to visit Belgium during July next. Those wishing to join should communicate with Mr. Chambers before April 15th. Either a five days' trip, or a fortnight's tour, could be had at very reasonable charges. This opportunity of visiting the old and renowned Flemish cities in congenial company should appeal to a large circle, and it is hoped that names will be sent in freely. The Plantin Museum at Antwerp is alone worth a visit (see article in "The Library Assistant," May, 1906), but the tour would include the cities of Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, Tournai, etc., as well as the district of the Ardennes, made famous in Sir Walter Scott's "Quentin Durward."

Proposed Holiday Camp.

It is also proposed to organise a holiday under canvas next summer, provided not less than 20 assistants send in their names, with a guarantee of attendance, not later than April 15th. Of the beneficial results of such a holiday it is unnecessary to say much here; the simple life appeals to all at times, and under canvas it is possible to make one's condition as primitive as one wishes. The camp will be within 50 miles of London, possibly near the Thames. Bell tents, with mattresses and pillows, and a large marquee, will be provided, as well as the necessary cooking utensils. Each camper will be required to do a certain amount of the requisite camp duty, full particulars of which will be circulated later. The inclusive charge (including railway fare) is not expected to exceed £1 1s. each per week. The date proposed is July 8th to 20th, but this may be altered or extended to suit the wishes of the campers. Those wishing to participate are requested to notify Mr. Chambers, who will also be glad to receive suggestions from those qualified to make them.

FOOTBALL MATCH.

On Wednesday, February 13th, at Temple Mills, Leyton (G.E.Rly.), the L.A.A. will play the Wednesday Athletic F.C. (West Ham). Kick-off at 3 o'clock precisely. L.A.A. team:—R. Cooper; S. Bacon, E. J. Bell; F. Dallimore, V. B. Usherwood, H. C. Sawtell; C. Henley, C. R. Cadman, E. G. H. Carter, A. Kenny, E. A. Funnell. Linesmen: Messrs. Peplow and Sayers.

Train from Liverpool Street, 2.18 p.m., reaching Leyton at 2.58 p.m.

YORKSHIRE BRANCH.

The second bi-monthly meeting of the Yorkshire Branch will be held at the **Public Library, Wakefield**, by kind invitation of G. H. Wood, Esq., Chief Librarian, on **Thursday, February 14th**, at 7 p.m. Mr. J. B. Ellison (Hon. Sec.) will read a paper on "Provincial Assistants and Technical Education." All library assistants, and others interested in library work, are invited to attend. At this meeting three members will be elected to the Committee.

The following librarians have kindly consented to become Hon. Presidents of the Branch:—Messrs. J. A. Charlton Deas (Sunderland), A. Furnish (York), T. W. Hand (Leeds), W. F. Lawton (Hull), A. Tait (Leeds Institute) and Butler Wood (Bradford). The prospects are most encouraging.

JANUARY MEETING.

This meeting was held at Fulham Town Hall on Wednesday evening, January 16th. The attendance was slightly below the average. Mr. Walter S. C. Rae, Borough Librarian, who had invited the Association to meet at Fulham, had kindly provided light refreshments, which were served before the business of the evening.

The meeting, which was presided over by Mr. Rae, was honoured by the presence of many members of the Fulham Public Libraries Committee and others, among whom were the Mayor, Councillor James Littleby, who wore the robes of office; Councillor the Rev. W. J. S. Whitly, M.A.; Mr. W. Vere; and Mr. R. M. Prescott (Town Clerk). Each of the gentlemen named briefly addressed the meeting.

In accordance with notice given in our January number, the following amendment to the Rules was proposed by the Hon. Secretary:—

Rule 5. Insert after "power to vote" the clause, "The Committee shall have the power to co-opt as members of the Committee the Hon. Secretaries or other officers of Branch Association Committees."

This was seconded by Mr. Hawkins and carried unanimously.

Mr. George E. Denne, Richmond Public Library, read a paper on "Donations" which is printed in the present issue. A discussion followed, taken part in by Messrs. Bell, Twort, Fostall, Kirby, Lundie and others.

Mr. James D. Young then contributed a paper on "The present condition of Library Legislation: its advantages, drawbacks and probable future," which will also be found elsewhere in this issue. A paper by Mr. A. H. Yates, formerly of Hornsey, now of the Sunderland Public Library, on "The need of a connection between the Public Library and the Theatre," was read by Mr. Kirby, but owing to the lateness of the hour no discussion was possible. We shall, however, print the paper in an early number of the journal.

Discussion.

In opening the discussion on Mr. Young's paper Mr. Stewart said the practice of charging for borrower's tickets, although a small matter, came within the scope of library legislation. It was now generally recognised that the practice was illegal. Probably the reason it was still in force was that the cost of contesting its legality would be too great. The custom was, he thought, dying out. The most important question dealt with in the paper was the removal of the rate limit. To the removal of the limitation there were certain objections. Some maintained that the time was not yet ripe, but the main objection seemed to be that its removal would militate against the adoption of the Acts. He did not think that this objection held good, as most people when called upon to vote were not even aware that the rate was limited to 1d. Local rating was an important item dealt with by Mr. Young. Most libraries, in spite of the recent Liverpool case, were either altogether exempt, or were rated at a merely nominal figure.

Mr. Coutts did not think the time was yet ripe for the removal of the rate limit. To put forward a proposal of this kind at present would be disastrous, so far as London was concerned. They must make the best use of the present 1d., and before attempting to influence Parliament must influence public opinion. Delegation of powers was most desirable.

Mr. Sayers said that Mr. Young began with the proposition that the library was an educational institution. This was true, but it was a recreative institution also. This justified the admission of much good light literature which should be excluded from a rigidly educational institution.

The discussion was continued by Mr. White, Mr. Rae and others.

Votes of thanks to the readers of the papers, and to Mr. Rae for his exceedingly kind welcome, brought to a close an enjoyable meeting.

Thanks are due to Mr. W. G. Hawkins (Sub-Librarian) for the excellence of the arrangements, and for his efforts to ensure the comfort of members.

THE VISIT TO LAMBETH PALACE.

The visit to Lambeth Palace on January 19th was an unqualified success, thirty-five members being present. The party was received in the Library by Mr. S. Wayland Kershaw, M.A., Librarian, who had kindly prepared an exhibition of some of the treasures belonging to the Palace Library. The display included a gorgeously illuminated missal; one of the four copies on vellum of the Gospels, from the press of Gutenberg, a magnificent example by the way; several ancient and historic bindings, and two or three beautiful Oriental MSS. After describing these, Mr. Kershaw gave a brief outline of the history of the Library, and of the Hall, built by Bishop Juxon, in which it is housed. The vicissitudes through which the collections of books, MSS., pamphlets, etc., made by former archbishops passed, as recounted by Mr. Kershaw, were most interesting, and considering the wars, conspiracies, spiteful devastations, and rumours of wars, it is almost a wonder any books remain to witness the good intentions of the archbishops in this direction. There was something to interest all present, whether their predilections were for architecture, heraldry, stained glass, carvings, printed books or manuscripts, and undoubtedly the surroundings made an impression on all.

From the Library the party proceeded to the Picture Gallery in the old Guard Room, and afterwards visited the Chapel, the Lollard's Tower and the Lollard's Prison. A short inspection of the outsides of the buildings, including the residential quarters, was then made, and the party dispersed after an enjoyable and instructive afternoon. The sincere thanks of the Association are due to Mr. Kershaw for his very cordial welcome.

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF LIBRARY LEGISLATION: ITS ADVANTAGES, DRAWBACKS, AND PROBABLE FUTURE.

By JAMES D. YOUNG, Greenwich Public Libraries.

The following is a short account of the most important Acts of Parliament which concern public libraries. The first (Ewart's Act) was passed in 1850. This was followed by a number of others, but they were all repealed by the Act of 1892, which states that every urban district, and every parish in England and Wales which is not in an urban district shall be a library district. Under this Act not only public libraries, but museums, art galleries and schools for art may be provided. No charge is to be made for admission to a library or museum, or, in the case of a lending library, for the use thereof by the inhabitants of the district. This proves, I think, that the charge of a penny for a voucher, or ticket, which is still made in a few libraries, is an illegal imposition which no law-abiding corporation should tolerate. The Act of 1892 was amended in 1893, 1898, and 1901. The Act of 1898, which applies to libraries supported by industrial societies, friendly societies, and trade unions, as well as to public libraries, provides for the punishment of those who may disturb readers by disorderly conduct, who may swear, gamble, or try to remain in any of the above-mentioned institutions after closing hours. They are liable on summary conviction to a fine of 40s. The Act of 1901 was intended to deal with the liability of managers of libraries to proceedings for libel. The particular clause dealing with the matter was, however, struck out of the Bill, and this somewhat important matter still remains to be settled. In addition to these general Acts there are a number of other Acts which have reference to public libraries, but lack of space forbids us mentioning them in detail. One of them is, however, worthy of notice. The "Act to make provision for local government in London," passed in 1899, confers the power of adopting the Public Libraries Act, 1892, on the Metropolitan Borough Councils, by extending to them the provisions of the Act of 1893.

The Act of 1893 delivered all classes of constituencies, except London and the rural parishes (the latter not necessarily), from passing the Public Libraries Act by means of a poll.

From the foregoing résumé it will be easily seen that the kind of institutions Parliament wished to bring into existence were to be of an exclusively educational character, the word "educational," of course, to be given a liberal interpretation.

But as soon as the libraries actually came into being many of the ideas enunciated by our worthy legislators were instantly put on one side. Imagine the latest American musical farce atrocity being performed at the Opera House, Paris, or some horrible melodrama stalking the boards of the Schiller Theatre, Berlin. Impossible, you will say. And yet the latest sensational novel or the yellowist halfpenny journalism have about as much right to be placed in an educational establishment. In fact, to put it plainly, Parliament has been a little imposed upon. Public libraries are still, however, to a considerable extent educational establishments. Probably it is now too late to suggest the sudden extinction of the popular and non-educational phases of the movement. The public would clamour for the rights they have been so long used to.

Now although Parliament has decreed that 1d. in the £ is the utmost rate which may be levied for public library purposes, yet there are still ways of circumventing its desires in this matter. When a corporate body wishes to levy more than the regulation rate it must get the permission of Parliament before it can do so. The usual way of arriving at this desirable consummation is by the old parliamentary trick of "tacking." This is performed as follows. A clause is added to some Bill, probably dealing with tramways or water supply, which has to go before the House stating that the Borough, Urban District, or whatever it may be, of so-and-so wishes to have the library rate limitation partially or entirely removed, and the thing is done. In the matter of auditing the accounts of public libraries there is no law of the Medes and the Persians which does not change. The provinces are in quite a different position to the London boroughs. The latter are subjected to a severe inquisition by an official from the Local Government Board; the accounts of the former are lightly passed over by a chartered accountant, who must behave himself in 1907, or run the risk of losing his professional fee in 1908.

A few suggestions may now be made with regard to reform in the matter of parliamentary public library legislation. Firstly it is obvious that the Acts are quite overburdened with much extraneous matter. They are too ambitious and on too grand a scale, and deal with many forms of public educational work which could by no means be carried out on the limited income. The problem of this limited rate should also be manfully faced and some conclusion arrived at. At present Parliament has practically no power to prevent a corporate body from levying more than a penny in the £ if that body is only firmly determined that more shall be levied. Surely they

should delegate that power which they do not possess to those bodies which do possess it *de facto*, if not *de jure*. Or else as a preliminary step it could allow the rate to go up to, but not beyond, 2d. or 3d. in the £. If they do not wish to do this, then with a limited rate the activities and the expense of the non-educational side should be cut down. The penny rate is a very fair amount, but to keep a large number of departments going on it is an absurdity too frequently due to the mistaken zeal of a librarian or Committee who wish, like the hero of the ancient fable, to please everybody.

The Library Association is at present engaged in trying to change the nature of public library legislation. They have drawn up a Bill which, if it becomes law, will be productive of great results. There are two very important clauses in this Bill. The first is to the effect that the rate limit is to be removed. The second is that the library authority is to be the County Council. This will make series of travelling libraries possible in country districts. And we must remember that for agrarian districts the Acts have been until now practically a dead letter. Surely it is time that something should be done for Giles, who has hardly had his share in the various humanising movements which have from time to time been inaugurated. Districts which have already provided themselves with libraries, however, are to be left *in statu quo*. Here is a good opportunity to discuss the probable future financial position of the library. The most that can be expected from Parliament is permission to levy more than a 1d. in the £ should it be considered desirable. And that this permission will soon be obtained, and by a general Act instead of special legislation, may be anticipated with confidence. But that is only half the battle. We have next to convince the Committees and the public generally that if more money is entrusted to us it will be wisely and judiciously spent. As soon as we have done this the finances will come flowing in. From this we see that the reform must necessarily come from within, and not from without, as so many learned confrères are fond of declaring.

There is unfortunately at present some divergence in the way of treating public libraries with regard to rating. At one time the matter was supposed to have been settled, and that a public library was a literary and scientific institute within the meaning of the Act, and as such could claim exemption from rates and taxes. But a contrary idea seems to have percolated into the brains of some of our local authorities, and as a result from time to time the all too scanty funds are mulcted in a most awful manner. It would be de-

sirable to have the matter settled once and for all, and this should be done by Parliament, which should give some final decision.

I will now leave parliamentary legislation and consider local legislation. It may be at once objected that a local body is an executive body only. From the parliamentary point of view this is so; but from the librarian's point of view it is a legislating body, and he is the executive officer. The work of the Committee begins as soon as it is created, generally immediately after the adoption of the Acts. I should suggest that their first step should be the appointment of a librarian. The advisability of this has apparently not yet been fully appreciated by Committees. And yet picture the position these Committeemen find themselves in. They will probably have to decide on adopting a certain plan for the library, or which already existing building shall be altered so that it may be utilised as a library. Now those are very serious matters, and in the discussion of them what can be more helpful than to have competent professional advice? There are cases in which a little such advice in the early stages of the growth of a library would have saved ratepayers hundreds, occasionally even thousands, of pounds only a decade or so hence. And it is a clearly demonstrated fact that architects cannot design satisfactory libraries unless they have a librarian to help them. I would further suggest that while the building is in course of erection the librarian should be employed in making a very careful selection of books, classifying and cataloguing them. In the meantime the books could be stored in temporary premises.

The next action of the Council should be to make a delegation of powers to the Libraries Committee. The advisability of this must have appealed strongly to many librarians, especially in the early stages of organising. The delegation of powers is a plan which is in force all over Scotland, with the single exception of Glasgow, and appears to work very well. In Glasgow the Corporation did not adopt the Scotch Acts in their entirety, as they did not wish to lose all power over the libraries. This is a spirit which is here and there growing, and it should be strenuously combatted. Delegation of powers is also in use in many provincial English towns, but so far as I am aware has not yet been introduced into any of the London boroughs. In London, however, the same practical result would be obtained if the Council were to make over the whole of the library income to the Libraries Committee once a year. Some such plan is almost certain to become general in the near future. The reason for this is quite obvious. Public

libraries, despite all that is said against them, are, or ought to be, educational establishments. Therefore they should not be under a body whose chief occupation is to look after public health, and this is what a local council really is. When the Acts were first passed, however, there was no recognised educational body, and, by sheer hazard, the newly created institutions were put under the authority of an alien body. Had there been local educational authorities in those days, or an authority similar to the French Minister of Public Instruction, our history might have been very different. In time, however, the right of the public library to be free from the interference of a sanitary body must be recognised. It does not necessarily follow, however, that all authority will be centralised. There may be a central body who will supervise and see that a certain standard of efficiency is maintained, and vote grants of money or books to deserving cases, that is, should Government ever feel liberally enough inclined to spend a little money in this way. Those Government grants are, however, common in the Colonies, and in Ireland County Councils have power to make grants to public libraries, by the Public Libraries (Ireland) Amendment Act, 1902, so they may ultimately appear in England. Otherwise local committees, probably composed partly of councillors and largely of non-councillors, will continue to be the local authority, while the amount of rate levied will be settled by the Council. I also opine that there may be more cordial and actively sympathetic relations between other educational bodies and the public libraries.

DONATIONS.

By GEORGE E. DENNE, Richmond Public Library.

We who are engaged in public libraries know how handicapped the work is for the want of sufficient funds. Apart from the penny rate, the library has to rely on the generosity of private individuals and corporate bodies.

We are all aware that some towns, more fortunate than others, have donations in the form of perhaps two or three well-equipped libraries; others have to be satisfied with receiving small amounts of money, books, and periodicals. The majority of gifts take the form of books and periodicals. Though large gifts of money are desirable and welcomed for the purchasing of sites and the building of libraries, it is in the daily work of the library that the want of a larger income is felt. For that reason, encouragement should be given to those who offer gifts of books, useful magazines, or periodicals.

Valuable gifts of books are received from Government offices, such as the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, British and South Kensington Museums, Stationery Office and Patent Office. Gifts are also received from the India and Colonial Offices, and from the United States Government. Grants of books, varying in value from £10 to £50 are made by the Oxford and Cambridge Presses. Grants of money from the Excise duties, for the purchase of technical works, have been made to libraries from some of the County Councils. Applications for these grants had to be made to the Technical Education Committee of the County Council, and it was necessary to submit to the Committee, for approval, a list of the books proposed to be purchased. The books remain the property of the Council, and are returnable to them in the event of the library being dissolved. I believe that these grants are now discontinued, owing to the County Council being responsible for the raising of the money for educational purposes under the Education Act of 1902.

Apart from gifts received from corporate bodies, there is a diversity of opinion as to whether every donation should be accepted. I have said that small gifts of books should be encouraged, but this does not imply the acceptance of everything that is offered. In the event of a book or books being sent round to all the libraries as an advertisement, more or less of the donor's or another person's opinions, the same should be acknowledged and dealt with according to its worth. There is a difficulty that arises in the offer of gifts, generally from local residents. The gifts are useful in themselves, but the library is not the most suitable place for them. I wish to invite your opinion as to the policy to be adopted in these cases. Take, for example, the offer by a resident, of a quantity of unbound illustrated papers. Are they to be accepted? They are useless to the library, because, probably, they are incomplete. If complete the binding of them would be costly, and far above the value of the gift. It only remains for them, if accepted, to be sold as waste paper. I would suggest that the would-be-donor should be frankly told the facts of the case, but at the same time the librarian, on behalf of the committee, might suggest a more useful disposal of the gift, say, the local hospital, or like institution, where they would be welcomed. If necessary, let the library be the means through which the gift may be forwarded. This policy of the acceptal and refusal of gifts is well stated in a small paragraph in the "Library Association Record" for July, 1901.

It occasionally happens that museum curios, pictures, etc., not necessarily of local interest, are offered to the library.

Again the question arises, are these to be accepted? The answer must be governed by local circumstances, but I am against their acceptance, if it means that the reference and reading rooms are to be used for exhibiting them. The library is the place for the study of knowledge as given in books, and not for the exhibition of pictures and curios, with the attendant noise and interruption. The question does not arise if the town possesses a museum and art gallery.

The library often receives offers of periodicals which are of very little interest to the general public. It is difficult to decide whether the offers should be accepted or refused. These periodicals are more often in the way than anything else, and they certainly take up a large amount of valuable space. In addition to the periodicals, gifts of country and provincial newspapers are often received. These are of some interest to readers, especially those who know the different districts the papers cover, but it is doubtful whether this justifies the library accepting them. Newspapers, if not kept on stands—and these are not worth that expense—are very untidy.

When gifts are offered to the library, who is to decide whether they are to be accepted, the committee or the librarian? If it is the policy of a library committee to accept every gift that is offered, then the librarian may accept them on behalf of the committee. But if the committee is anxious to admit only those gifts that are useful, and to refuse such as are undesirable, it would be better for the librarian to report all gifts offered, so that the acceptance or refusal of these gifts should go out in the committee's name, otherwise it might be thought that the decision was governed by the personal views of the librarian. At the outset it is necessary for the librarian to obtain the full sympathy of the committee in any policy that may be adopted in this matter, and that the policy should be adhered to.

I will very briefly outline the necessary routine work when accepting donations. All gifts should be promptly acknowledged, and a record of them entered in a book specially kept for the purpose, each gift receiving a progressive number.

The acknowledgment may take the form of a printed postcard or circular. This postcard or circular intimates that the donation will be reported to the committee at their next meeting. Such communication would not necessarily mean the acceptance of the gifts, that question being decided at the committee meeting. After the gifts are accepted by the committee, a more imposing form of acknowledgment is sent. The form varies in small details, as to size and wording, but it is

generally a single or double quarto sheet, tendering the thanks of the committee, space being provided for the description of the gift.

It is usual to insert donation labels in books that have been presented. In some libraries these labels are only fastened in those books that are located in the reference library, it being considered a waste of time and material to do the same for those in the lending library, as the volumes so soon want binding, when, of course, the label is destroyed. The labels are generally of a size, about 4-in. by 3-in., containing the name of the library, and the coat of arms, with space for the donor's name and address, and the date of presentation.

In accepting periodicals and magazines as gifts, trouble often occurs through irregularity of receipt. Generally they come regularly for two or three months, then after one or two breaks, they are perhaps received again, but more probably stop. It is annoying to readers to find the name of a periodical on the list, or a space for it in the rack, and then, after a prolonged search, to be told by an assistant that the last two or three issues have not been received.

It is to be recommended that no periodical should be exhibited in the reading room unless there is a probability of its regular arrival. If the gift is desirable there is no harm done in writing to the sender, asking if the periodical may be expected regularly, or, as an alternative, wait for a few weeks, to see if the gift is received as published. A library is much better without gifts of periodicals, if they cannot be received to time.

APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS.

FENTON, Mr. W. A., Sub-Librarian, Cambridge, to be Librarian.

NEESHAM, Mr. Ernest W., Librarian, Gainsborough, to be Librarian, Erdington.

BROWN, Mr. William, Assistant, Sunderland, to be Librarian, Gainsborough.

JONES, Mr. Joseph, Librarian, Salisbury, to be Librarian, Torquay.

STEELE, Mr. H. G., Assistant, Carlisle, to be Assistant, Leyton.

KYTE, Mr. E. C., Librarian-in-Charge, Holborn, to be Librarian, Harlesden.

All communications relating to this journal should be addressed to the Hon. Editor, Mr. HUGH SMITH, Bishopsgate Institute, London, E.C.

SURVEY OF THE MONTH.

By the HON. SECRETARY.

This year begins perhaps not with keener hopes, but certainly with brighter prospects for our Association than any previous one. Already, since June, fifty-seven new members have joined our ranks; and if this were not a sufficient sign of vitality, the account which appeared last month of the successful birth of our Yorkshire Branch would serve to show that the condition of the Association is as favourable as is commensurate with sure progress. In this "survey" we hope every month to give a brief statement of what the Association is doing, with a brief survey of library matters generally as they affect library assistants.

It is gratifying to know that at least two-thirds of the candidates who assembled at the London School of Economics on January 9th to receive certificates won at the last L.A. examination, were members of our Association. Mr. Sidney Webb's address was well worth hearing, although many of our members will remember that he made similar statements at our Inaugural in 1904, and at an earlier meeting of the L.A.

Our Fulham meeting is reported elsewhere. We regret that the attendance did not do the Association credit, but the discussion was very good. The Mayor addressed us in the intervals of a Council meeting. Mr. Prescott, the Town Clerk, told us to work for an improved status; for, said he, considering the training and education required for his office, the librarian was by no means adequately recognised among professional men.

We have to congratulate Mr. A. H. Yates on his appointment to Sunderland. Mr. Yates is a member of promise, and we shall miss him at our London meetings.

The librarianship of Torquay is a subject of conversation just now. The salary is a paltry one; that a professional man, trained and experienced, with a competent knowledge of ancient and modern books and their treatment, should be found to offer his whole time for £130 per annum is painful; but we suppose one would relinquish something to live in so beautiful a place. Still, this has been the average salary of three recent appointments.

It is in strange contrast to the general success of children's rooms that the Lewisham Committee find it advisable to close the children's room at the Brockley Branch because it is of no educational value, and is only a meeting place for boys and girls. We cannot remember such a remarkable result, although the argument of the boys and girls meeting is an old one.

The three letters we have received recently on "The Study of Classification" have specially interested us.

The chief reason why correspondence classes in the subject such as Bibliion desires are not held is because there is no suitable text-book. There is no complete text-book of classification, which does not break down on the historical or theoretical side. A.S. is not quite right when he assumes that because an assistant works with a minute classification he has necessarily a minute knowledge of classification. It is perfectly possible to use the decimal system without understanding one of the logical principles on which it is based. Consequently the great and valuable practical experience that men on the organisation staff at Glasgow must be receiving, counts for little in at least half of the examination. We have urged the establishment of classification teaching by correspondence, and have been met by the reply that there is no text-book. Brown's "Manual of Classification" is the best all-round book on the subject undoubtedly, but it does not contain enough detail. The introduction to the Decimal and Expansive systems are of no comprehensive value, except where they lay down rules for classifying; they are too special. The "Subject Classification" introduction is much more satisfactory, but here again the exigencies of space and the fact that the theory is levelled at the accompanying classification, reduce its value as a *general* treatise on the subject. The second chapter of Richardson is valuable, the first is neither here nor there. However, if the student studies the appended bibliography with some care, he may do much. The best approach to classification is through Jevon's "Elementary Lessons in Logic"; this will give some insight into terminology. Then the same author's chapter on "Classification" in his "Principles of Science"; then Brown; then Edward Edwards's chapter in his "Memoirs of Libraries"; then the article in "Greenwood's Year Book," which may be followed by the introduction to the three great classification systems; Richardson might fitly conclude the study.

[The review of the library literature of the month which formed part of this Survey is crowded out.—ED.]

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of "The Library Assistant."

Annotations.

Sir,—I should like to make the following suggestion, which, as I was present at the Islington meeting, I know was not mentioned either by those who read papers there or in the discussion. It is that annotations should not be confined to the catalogue only, but be placed in the books themselves. If the catalogue entries were cut out and pasted in the books,

or typed on slips and placed in the books, or even written in the books themselves (though this latter course is not recommended) it would assist choice, especially in an open-access library, or where a catalogue was not available. This form of annotating offers scope for much fuller entries, and could also include entries considered too trifling for the printed catalogue, which naturally has to be kept down to its lowest limits on the score of expense. Cross references between books could be more general, and especially to volumes of essays which often contain criticisms of books and dramas. When there is a museum and art gallery in connection with the library, a stronger link can be made by having references from books to specimens, pictures or portraits, and also vice versa.

Naturally a card catalogue could do this better than slips pasted in the books, but all libraries are not blessed with this apparatus, and the above suggestion could be adopted *pro tempore*.

ARCHD. H. YATES.

Sunderland.

OUR NEW COVER.

The handsome design which forms our new cover is by Mr. G. H. McCall, Librarian of the Limehouse Public Library, and a former member of the L.A.A., and is, we think, a fine specimen of that clever artist's work. This is the second time that Mr. McCall has furnished us, free of charge, with a design for the purpose, thereby proving his continued interest in the Association. We feel sure that members would wish us to express to Mr. McCall their appreciation of his kindness.

NEW MEMBERS.

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